

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

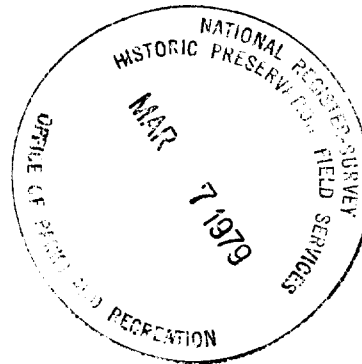
Date Entered FEB 23 1979

Name

Location

Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge

Poughkeepsie
Dutchess and Ulster Counties



Also Notified

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan
Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr.

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON The Great Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge

→ The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

The Hudson River

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Poughkeepsie/Highland VICINITY OF

25th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New York

036

Dutchess/Ulster

027/111

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER <u>abandoned</u>

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Consolidated Rail Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

Penn Center Plaza

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dutchess County Office Building (Records Room)

STREET & NUMBER

22 Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Poughkeepsie

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Resources of the Hudson

DATE

January 1969

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Hudson River Valley Commission

CITY, TOWN

Albany

STATE

New York

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge crosses the Hudson River at a point approximately equidistant from New York City and Albany.

The over-all length of the Poughkeepsie bridge, including approaches, is 6,767 feet, divided as follows into three major parts: the Poughkeepsie approach, four deck-girder and 21 Warren deck-truss spans, 2,640 feet; river crossing, seven deck-truss spans, 3,094 feet; Ulster County approach, nine Warren deck-truss spans and one deck-girder, 1,033 feet. The minimum clear height, between mean high water and the bottom of the deepest truss, is 130 feet, while the total height from foundation to base of rail is 342 feet. The seven trusses of the river crossing are arranged symmetrically about a central pair of cantilevers and a suspended span, the three together having a length of 546 feet. From end to center span on each side there are, in order, an anchor span 201 feet long, a pair of cantilevers and a floating span together 548 feet long, and a connecting simple span 525 feet long and 88 feet deep. (Condit, American Building Art, p. 313).

The Ulster County approach, on the west, is characterized by woodland, while the Poughkeepsie approach, on the east, is urban residential.

The bridge is riveted steel. The first and sixth piers, on the west and east shores, respectively, are concrete. However, the four river piers consist of a timber crib and grillage (115 feet x 100 feet) filled with concrete and broken stone, surmounted by rock-faced granite blocks (40 feet x 80 feet). The 180-foot trestles, with lattice bracing, rest on the river piers; their counterparts over land diminish in size until the track meets ground. Originally double-tracked, the bridge was subsequently gauntleted (1917-1918), and later, a single track was laid (1959) for increased stability against eccentric loading. The road bed is comprised of steel rails laid over wooden cross ties which are attached to the bridge superstructure of spans and viaducts. On either side is wooden plank decking, laid longitudinally. Two simple iron railings delimit the bridge.

The bridge has been unused since May 8, 1974, when a fire caused substantial damage to a portion of the deck.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1876-1888

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John F. O'Rourke, chief eng.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building of the Great Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge encountered both political and physical obstacles. However, two respected and powerful Poughkeepsians were able to persuade individuals to subscribe, bridge companies to take the contracts and the State Legislature to renew the charter, during the twelve years that it took to see the bridge to completion. As a result, the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge was "one of the great bridges of the [nineteenth] century" (Condit, p. 157), a significant transportation achievement and a symbol of progress to Poughkeepsians.

The 1860's was a progressive era in Poughkeepsie. The river front was crowded with a variety of industries, real estate was booming, the country's first sand filtration water system was being designed, New York Central was improving the successful east shore railroad, and finally the Poughkeepsie and Eastern Railroad became a reality. Soon after the latter was complete, the possibility of a bridge spanning the Hudson River was suggested.

As early as 1868, John I. Platt, editor of the Poughkeepsie Eagle, published an article promoting the bridge, bringing the idea to public attention. The importance of such a bridge was two-fold: to introduce a crossing over the Hudson between New York City and Albany, and by doing so, to lure the nation's vast coal supply from the Pennsylvania mines through Poughkeepsie to the industries of New England. By 1871, Poughkeepsie's charismatic mayor, Harvey G. Eastman, founder and president of Eastman Business School, had joined the crusade and, together with Platt and P. P. Dickinson, engineer, he drafted a charter for the bridge company, which became law on May 11, 1871. Among the incorporators were many notable Poughkeepsians, including Platt, Eastman and Matthew Vassar, founder of Vassar College.

From the onset, political and economic difficulties hampered the construction of the bridge. During the first year, an amendment to the charter was necessary to change the design from a suspension to a cantilever bridge. This was accomplished in the face of great controversy; boatmen feared that the bridge piers would cause serious accidents. In

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The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge Hudson River Dutchess/Ulster New York
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

the course of events, Harvey Eastman was elected to the State Assembly to insure passage of the amendment. Next, the incorporators sought funds to inaugurate the project. At this same time, the Pennsylvania Railroad was investigating an expeditious route to New England, and upon John Platt's persuasion, agreed to subscribe to the bridge stock. J. Edgar Thompson, president of the railroad, and A. J. Dennis, chairman of the investigation committee, bought \$1,100,00 worth of stock, which was well over half of the total project cost. In September, 1873, a board of directors, forming the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company, was elected, including Thompson, Dennis, Platt, Eastman and Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate of Pittsburgh. Soon after, a gala celebration was held. Not only the prominent members of the board, but also the mayors of Boston and Hartford and the governor of Connecticut were in attendance. However, under the strain of the financial Panic of 1873 and the death of J. Edgar Thompson, a major share holder, the scheme collapsed.

After Thompson's death and the subsequent withdrawal of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Eastman and Platt sought backing for the bridge in New England. In 1875, a committee from the Boston Chamber of Commerce visited Poughkeepsie, studied the proposition and agreed to the plans. Bridge companies showed interest in the project once again, and the American Bridge Company of Chicago was contracted to raise money and undertake the construction. Finally, building began on November 14, 1876. During the ensuing two years, work on the river piers was commenced, but the enterprise was again abandoned as the result of construction and financial difficulties, which caused the demise of the American Bridge Company.

Although Harvey Eastman died in 1878, the Poughkeepsie boosters never lost sight of their plans. They succeeded in extending the completion deadline from 1879, to 1883, and later to 1888. In 1886, the Manhattan Bridge Building Company was organized to finance the construction. Among the prominent backers was Henry Clay Frick, the coal tycoon and associate of Andrew Carnegie. The Union Bridge Company, which had completed the cantilever bridge at Niagara, was subcontracted to build the Poughkeepsie structure. Dawson, Symmes and Usher were the foundation engineers, while John F. O'Rourke, P. P. Dickinson and Arthur B. Paine were the structural engineers.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Work did not begin until October of 1886, necessitating another extension for the completion deadline.

Against this the most determined opposition sprang up on the part of boatmen, rival cities and the Storm King Bridge promoters. All the newspapers of Albany and Troy and most of those in New York joined this movement, and the New York Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade and Transportation, the Produce Exchange and other bodies, sent representatives to Albany to lobby in favor of a bill...to repeal the act of 1872 and compel the removal of the piers already partly built. (Platt, History of Poughkeepsie, p. 228)

Once again, the bridge promoters met the challenge. This time, John I. Platt was a member of the Assembly and successfully defeated the opposition's arguments. Another bill providing an extension was signed by the governor in the summer of 1888, just two months before the last pin was driven into the bridge. Although the structure was finished on August 29, 1888, the approaches were not completed until later that year, and the first train did not cross until December 29th.

Just as the boosters of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge had overcome great political and economic odds to see the enterprise to completion, the engineers found innovative solutions to the physical obstacles. They "faced every kind of difficulty in the extreme: a deep, wide tidal river, great depth of bearing rock, height of the palisades which fixed the level of the deck, and sheer length of the whole structure." (Condit, p. 158) The depth of bedrock and high tides of the Hudson River required the construction of 155-foot piers, which had to be sunk to a depth of 125 feet below the water. This necessitated partial construction above water, an elaborate floating procedure and further construction under the water. By the same token, the height of the river's bluffs resulted in a trestle approximately 180 feet high. Furthermore, the bridge's "total length of over a mile was a record for a steel structure, as was the 548-foot length of its channel span." (Condit, p. 158)

The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge not only signifies political, economic and engineering achievement in the face of adversity, but also the

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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aggressive, persistent spirit of Poughkeepsie's nineteenth-century entrepreneurs, and illustrates "a farsighted appraisal of its potential importance." (Condit, p. 158) The building of the bridge was an attempt to tie the nation's resources to regional centers of industry, as evidenced by the involvement of powerful nineteenth-century political leaders and businessmen from New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Condit, Carl W. American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

O'Rourke, John F. "On Poughkeepsie Bridge." A Study for the American Society of Engineers, 1888, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10

QUADRANGLE NAME Poughkeepsie

UTM REFERENCES QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

A	<u>18</u>	<u>587000</u>	<u>4617960</u>	B	<u>18</u>	<u>589040</u>	<u>4618000</u>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property bridges the Hudson River bluffs from the City of Poughkeepsie, on the east, to the vicinity of the Village of Highland, on the west, and is roughly 342' x 6767' x 88' in size.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		Dutchess	027
		Ulster	111

11 FORM PREPARED BY Townley McElhiney Sharp, Consultant
 NAME/TITLE Historic Architecture & Decorative Arts Consultants, Hurley, N.Y.
 Edited by: Raymond Smith, Hist. Prog. Analyst

ORGANIZATION Div. for Historic Preservation, Parks and Rec. DATE 11-24-78

STREET & NUMBER Agency Building # 1, Empire State Plaza TELEPHONE 518-474-0479

CITY OR TOWN Albany STATE New York

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE [Signature]

TITLE Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE

ATTEST: CHIEF OF REGISTRATION DATE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge Hudson River Dutchess/Ulster New York

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Platt, Edmund. The Eagle's History of Poughkeepsie from the Earliest Settlements, 1683 to 1905. Poughkeepsie: Platt and Platt, 1905.

Research File: New York State Division for Historic Preservation, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau, Albany, New York.

The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge
Poughkeepsie/Highland, New York

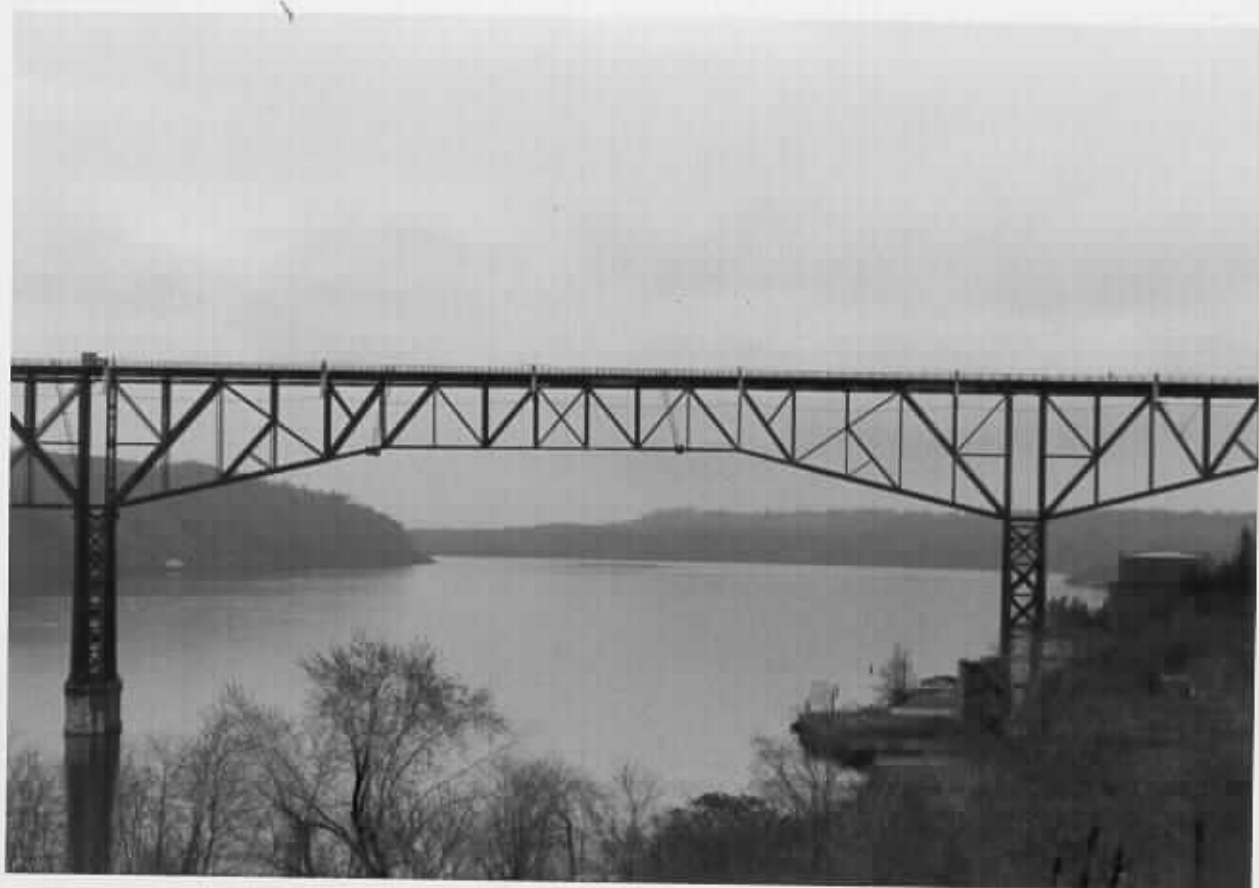
Poughkeepsie Quad

UTM References

A 18/587000/4617960

B 18/589040/4618000





POUGHKEEPSIE RAILROAD BRIDGE
Location: Hudson Riv. Dutchess/Ulst, NY
Credit: L. Corwin Sharp, HADAC, 1978
Neg. filed: N.Y.S. Div. for Historic
Preservation, Albany, NY
Looking North
Photo # 1

POUGHKEEPSIE RAILROAD BRIDGE
Location: Hudson Riv. Dutchess/Ulst, NY
Credit: L. Corwin Sharp, HADAC, 1978
Neg. filed: N.Y.S. Div. for Historic
Preservation, Albany, NY
Looking North, truss
Photo # 2



POUGHKEEPSIE RAILROAD BRIDGE
Location: Hudson Riv. Dutchess/Ulst, NY
Credit: L. Corwin Sharp, HADAC, 1978
Neg. filed: N.Y.S. Div. for Historic
Preservation, Albany, NY
Looking Northeast
Photo-# 3

POUGHKEEPSIE RAILROAD BRIDGE
Location: Hudson Riv. Dutchess/Ulst, NY
Credit: L. Corwin Sharp, HADAC, 1978
Neg. filed: N.Y.S. Div. for Historic
Preservation, Albany, NY
Looking Northeast, detail: truss
Photo # 4



POUGHKEEPSIE RAILROAD BRIDGE

Location: Hudson Riv. Dutchess/U1st, NY
Credit: L. Corwin Sharp, HADAC, 1978
Neg. Filed: N.Y.S. Div. for Historic
Preservation, Albany, NY
Looking Northeast, detail: pier, trestle
photo # 5

POUGHKEEPSIE RAILROAD BRIDGE
Location: Hudson Riv. Dutchess/U1st, NY
Credit: L. Corwin Sharp, HADAC, 1978
Neg. Filed: N.Y.S. Div. for Historic
Preservation, Albany, NY
Looking West, railroad bed
photo # 6

Transport

40

10071

027-40-0025

1071

90NR0370
96PR0567
99PR4329

NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST
STATEWIDE SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. Name (Common and Historic) Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge

Location 2. Dutchess County 3. Lloyd Town 4. Poughkeepsie City

5. Address or Location Rte. 44-65; over Hudson River epsie

6. Type Truss & cantilever 7. Subject or Theme Engineering Transportation

8. Date of Construction 1873-1888 9. Architect (If Known) _____

10. Builder (If known) American Bridge Co. (liquidated); W. W. Gibbs; Manhattan Bridge Building Co.; Union Bridge Co.

11. Original Owner New York, New Haven, and Hartford Rail Road

12. Original Use railroad bridge

13. Present Owner New York, New Haven, and Hartford Rail Road
Name

Address

14. Present Use railroad bridge

15. Physical Condition Good

16. Surveys None

17. Future Action Should be photographed by HABS. There may be some urgency here in view of the precarious financial condition of the New Haven Railroad. Include in National Register.

18. Surveyed by Malcolm D. Booth Date Surveyed 2/16/1968

NR

History and Significance: This was the first bridge spanning the Hudson River between New York City and Albany. It spans 2,608 feet of water and is 6,767 feet long altogether. It is supported 214 feet above the Hudson by six piers, and still carries east-west freight. It was officially completed, after three changes of contractors, on August 29, 1888.

Sources of Information: Special edition of Poughkeepsie Eagle, 1889. (no exact date given).

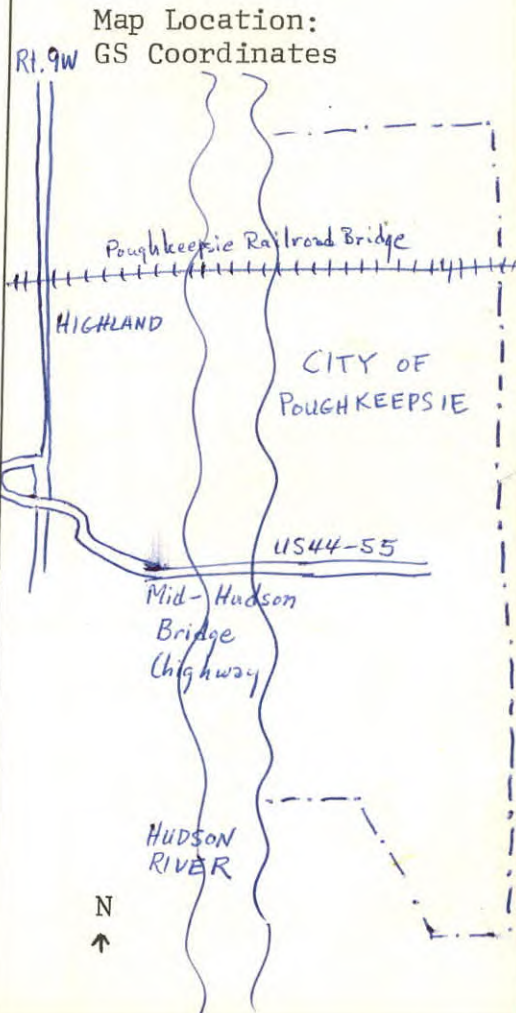
Photograph: Date

Direction of View

2/7/1968

Northwest

W6-T



Corwin, Wm R - Hist of the Pough RR & Its RR Connections

Chapter 4 Con of Pough RR, 1-15-1925

27

NY NH Hartford RR Co - controls & operates CNY Reg Co - Fr Campbell Hall to Br,
to Hopewell Jct to Brewsters, to Danbury Ann - Fr Pough to Miller ton & Branch line to
Silverdale, to Rhinecliff, New Plains to Shekomeko, Spas to Silverdale
Campbell-Hall - Danbury 76.9 miles
Pough to Miller ton 44.6 - Miller ton to Hart 68.8

7/ Pough Br Co - Inc Laws 71, Ch 897 - Form hr for RR, trams, vehicles, cattle
Limit to 1 Jan 76

8/ 4 Dec 1872 - 4th rd 679

78 to 81

80 to 83

82 to 88

87 to 89

Stock hrs issued 6/30/73

9/

11/26/73 grad broken

12/17/73 Cornerstone laid

74 - work stopped - June 73

75 - Reorganized - Pough to subscribe $\frac{1}{4}$ amt - NY pd in

76 - Contract with New Br Co - Start to top personnel dep

10/

80 - Reorganized

11/

Out 80 - work started

10/1/87 - last pier completed

8/29/88 - last pier driven - "Pier had been changed in contract to a cantilever."

12/29/88 - 1st loco - special

1/89 - Regular service

Get contract sd to her then amt \$250,000

12/

New Corp 82 - Pough RR + RR Co,

13/

To Phil Reed & Sons - To Get New Reg Co - To NY NH Hart

15-16

Pough \$300,000 man bonds - invest in 1st Mt 790 of Pough + E RR Co.
(changed 80 - (?) (66) ?

17/

To 2nd Mt bonds \$350,000

Finished 6/20/74

20/

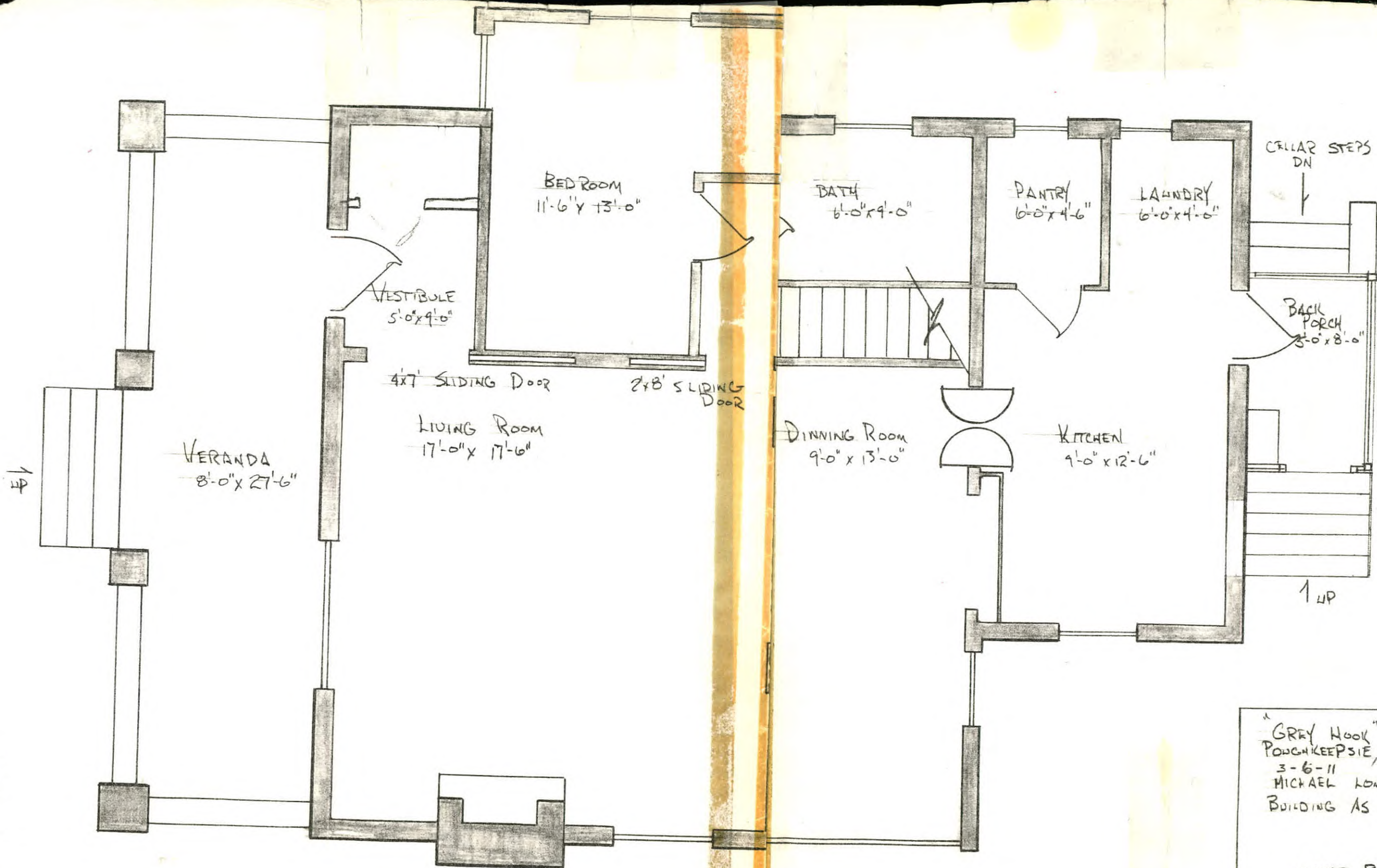
Pough + E RR to Pough, Hartford + Bond RR 75
NY + Mass RR successor 87

This proposal envisions the Richmond Museum as more than a history center. It ~~might~~ could become a county or city cultural center providing meeting space, work space and display space for ~~many~~ organizations engaged in many cultural pursuits. Other non-profit groups ~~in~~ in the area must be ~~sub~~ a headquarters for their ~~various~~ activities that could participate in operation of the Richmond Museum.

The NYSHT believes ~~that~~ it is ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~interest~~ of all individuals and organizations ~~to~~ ~~who~~ ~~are~~ ~~interested~~ ~~in~~ ~~preserving~~ ~~Batavia's~~ ~~heritage~~ ~~to~~ ~~consider~~ ~~carefully~~ ~~and~~ ~~quickly~~ ~~these~~ ~~apparently~~ ~~conflicting~~ ~~developments~~. ~~A~~ ~~large~~ ~~public~~ ~~meeting~~ ~~should~~ ~~be~~

It would seem desirable that a large public meeting be called, as soon as possible, so that there can be a complete ~~and~~ ~~open~~ ~~discussion~~ of a ~~need~~ to discuss completely and openly the ~~future~~ ~~proposal~~ for possible ways for using & saving the Dutch Man & for not altering the West Park Office. The ~~meeting~~ ~~should~~ ~~of~~ ~~course~~ ~~involve~~ ~~not~~ ~~only~~ ~~the~~ ~~public~~ ~~but~~ ~~also~~ ~~state~~ ~~and~~ ~~local~~ ~~groups~~ ~~and~~ ~~individuals~~.

For that reason, I am ~~ready~~ ~~open~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~planning~~



"GREY HOOK"
 Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
 3-6-11
 MICHAEL LONG
 BUILDING AS BUILT IN 1911